



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE SCHOOL REVIEW

A JOURNAL OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

VOLUME XIX
NUMBER 3

MARCH, 1911

WHOLE
NUMBER 183

THE AMERICAN IDEA

GRANT SHOWERMAN
The University of Wisconsin

The American idea? Is it possible? Can one whose teaching career had its beginning in a country school a score of years ago, who has attended institutes and conventions, and read chapters in pedagogical books, and articles in educational journals, and editorials and communications in the public prints, who has sat under ten years of faculty-meeting speeches and participated in ten years of what are called the "deliberations" of committees, and, above all, who has listened for twenty-five years to educational specialists presenting their multitudinous and maddening array of schemes as to the method and content of instruction—can one with this bewildering, kaleidoscopic experience still talk of *the American idea*?

Yes, within the past not very many years it has become more and more possible to speak of *the American idea*. There really *is* in all this nebulous whirling chaos of atomic educational ideas a nucleus which is becoming plainly visible.

I

The American idea will even admit of expression in words. Recognizing the futility of verbal definition, however, let us rather attempt to define by analysis. There are two factors that have been compounded into the American idea; or, rather, two more or less opposing forces which have been resolved into it. Into the nature of these forces, and into the manner of

their resolution and the character of their resultant, let us examine; and at the same time, casting aside prejudice as far as possible—which, for most people in a nation which takes its education much more seriously than its religion, is not so far as to necessitate the services of a surveyor—let us attempt to make plain the points at issue between the champions of the American idea and its assailants.

One of the two forces is to be recognized in the vividness of the American belief that “Knowledge is Power.” Nothing new in that, either in the words or in the thought they clothe; it is easily classed with the self-evident. Men of wit have always accomplished more than the brutish, even when their ambitions have been as brutish as those of the brutes themselves. Wit, and the intellectual knowledge so closely associated with it, have always brought men special advantages—let us not call them by the invidious name of special privileges, for they are the gift of nature, not the selfish appropriation of man, and are not of necessity selfishly employed. Other things being equal, those who possess them attain distinction in the game of civilization; it is as natural for them to do so, and as little to be blamed in them, as for others to go to sleep under instruction or to write with their tongues out.

This is the first of the forces that enter into the composition of the American idea—the lively American faith in the desirability of knowledge.

The second force is to be found in the equally intense American conviction of the possibility of knowledge, and of the citizen's right to it. For *its* origin we may look to another much-used quotation of self-evident truth—the democratic doctrine that “all men are created equal, endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among them life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,” and that “to secure these rights governments are instituted among men.”

Possibly there is more novelty in this saying than in the “Knowledge is Power” aphorism, even if we let its original wording stand; but, whatever the case with the author's original words, the corruption of them which speedily took place put

novelty into them indeed. The truth is that in actual practice, if not consciously in words, the American people have long been accustomed to interpret the Declaration as if the words "created" and "the pursuit of" were not there, and to look upon equality and happiness as inalienable rights, and to storm under the sense of wrong if they are *not* equal and happy; forgetting, in the first case, that even if men were created equal, all the forces of the thing called civilization immediately and effectively conspire to render impossible the continuation of the state; and, in the second case, that happiness is not the inalienable possession of anyone, that no one acquires it who does not pursue it, and that no one can engage in successful pursuit unless nature has given him some capacity for speed and endurance.

With these ideas as to the equal and inalienable right of all men to happiness, and with the facile general assumption of the identity of power and happiness, it was to be expected that knowledge, the instrument or equivalent of power, would soon be claimed by all claimants to the inalienable right to happiness. In a democracy everyone had the inalienable right to happiness; surely, therefore, everyone also possessed the inalienable right to knowledge.

This is the second force in our resolution—the national belief in universal education.

II

Having therefore settled that knowledge was power, and that power was happiness, and that everyone had the inalienable right to it, the American democracy set to in a fine glow to make straight the way for everyone to lay hold on that same knowledge which was power which was happiness. It universalized elementary education by making it the public right. It went further, and made it a public duty—a duty first because education was a necessary ingredient of good citizenship, and again a duty because it was a factor in the happiness of the individual. Whether the individual wanted it or not, he should have the instrument of knowledge and power thrust into his hands. To be sure, it was a free country; but still,

if a man didn't know enough to be happy of his own accord, he ought to be compelled to. He should be saved from himself, even if it took a truant officer.

This was fine. But, after all, elementary education was only a limited stage on the road to knowledge-equals-power-equals-happiness for all. From the elementary schools there were young people who went to the academy and the college, were admitted and graduated on payment of money and presentation of evidence of intellectual fitness, entered professional schools and offices, and were transformed into lawyers, doctors, preachers, professors, and other knowledgeable, powerful, and happy people who stood out above the common democratic throng. Of the many who started, the greater number were obliged to halt before reaching the end of the march to knowledge, power, and happiness.

This would never do. Democracy was not taking care of the inalienable rights of its children. What superior right to happiness had these few men and women merely because they had a little more money, or breeding, or brains? Let the state give all of its young people the same advantages. It was only accident of birth or fortune that kept the sons and daughters of the multitude from the privileges enjoyed by the few. The remedy was plain: let those advantages henceforth be open to all, without regard to fortune or birth.

This was fine, too. The high school was created, and the state college, and the state university, and the democratic dream of education was realized. All citizens had the right to an education free of tuition from the cradle to the graduate school. Knowledge, and power, and happiness were theoretically possible by every member of the commonwealth.

The people realized the greatness of the opportunity. They had early awakened to their privileges in the way of elementary education, which was natural enough. They speedily awakened also to the privileges of the high school, and sent their sons and daughters there more and more abundantly. As they came to possess more enlightenment, too—and more money—and a greater appreciation of the advantages of fraternity and sorority

life—they began to send their sons and daughters even to the state university. With a blind faith in education as the stairway from knowledge to power, and from power to happiness, democracy went into the educational building business with the vigor and enthusiasm of men raising a tower whose top should reach unto heaven. A college education for every individual became the ideal—and the practice also—in the circle of those who could muster money for room and board for four years.

Glorious ideal! Whose blood doesn't rise in warm surges at thought of a state full of knowledge, power, and happiness as the waters cover the sea? Happy the state whose god is the professor! No more aristocracy! The privileges of aristocracy should be annihilated through universal participation in them.

But—the building of the tower was attended by certain difficulties both surprising and disconcerting. The educational scheme didn't work according to expectation. The courses of study in the high school and college, modeled on those which had brought the coveted knowledge and power and happiness hereinbefore mentioned to so many generations in America and Europe, seemed to fail in virtue when *everyone* went to high school and university. There seemed to be a good deal of waste. Some came out with very slight knowledge and power, and were so unhappy in the process of acquiring even that little that it was at least doubtful whether they could ever restore the balance. Others came out with the traditional little knowledge that is a dangerous thing, and were made wretched for life through their ill adaptation to the professions whose ranks they were bent on invading; they had the form of knowledge and power and happiness without the reality, and all the voyage of their life was bound in shallows and in miseries. People began to say that education was spoiling good farmers and artisans and making poor doctors and lawyers and preachers. It soon became plain that not everyone who entered high school or university was made of the stuff that could be forged into lawyers and doctors, any more than every variety or quality of metal could be wrought into Damascus blades or watch

springs. A few only became really knowledgeable and powerful and happy in the old way.

But democracy couldn't afford to give it up. The ideal of a universal education was too precious. Perhaps not all *could* profit ideally by the high-school and college courses, but that was no reason why those of lesser wit should not have the privilege of developing what talent they had. If the subjects pursued were too difficult, why, let there be subjects to pursue which were not too difficult. If the powers of youthful candidates for knowledge and power and happiness were too slight to allow of their taking advantage of the vigorous training in vogue, let the training be accommodated to the powers. After all it didn't make so much difference how much the student brought to high school or college; it was a matter of how much he added while he was there to what he already had; it was a matter of relativity, not absoluteness. Hear the parable of the talents!

Enter, then, the easier subjects and the less exacting standards. Away with the ancient languages, which belonged to the dead past—dead, useless, impractical, and silly. Enter the modern foreign languages, which were less alien, less difficult, were said to contain all the thoughts ever set forth by antiquity, and were, besides, of some practical use in everyday life. After all, it wasn't the content of the subject; it was the strength and the amount of the work the student put on it. So long as there was earnestness and hard work, the character of the knowledge the student worked on made little difference. It was all the same whether he studied ancient subjects or modern, cultural or practical—provided he *did* study the modern and the practical. Subjects, like men, were democratic—harmoniously equipotential, as the scientists had it of certain of their cells, each one capable of just as much as every other—or, at least, if they were not, they should be made so.

Still further, as the character of the subject made no difference, and only the work signified, let the student himself choose the subject according to the interest he felt in it. It was natural to work harder at what you were interested in; consequently the student would do more; consequently there

would be better results. And besides, this would do away with the necessity of failure. There would be no more choosing of subjects too hard to master; no one would longer have an incentive to shirk, because he would be interested and industrious; no one would be cut off from the benefits of the high-school or college courses; no one would have reason to complain that he was deprived of inalienable rights.

And yet, surprisingly enough, there were still difficulties. Boys and girls simply couldn't learn to write good English; science was always baffling to some, and literature a dead letter to many; others couldn't understand history, to say nothing of remembering it; the modern foreign languages were almost as difficult as the ancient, and, with the exception of one or two which were used in commerce, almost as dead and useless and silly. There were still those who fell by the way, and lost the inalienable right to knowledge and power and happiness through the mere accident of having been born with inclinations somewhat different from the ordinary. Let the matter be looked into. Why should boys and girls be denied their inalienable right merely because they couldn't factor, or analyze, or learn a paradigm, or spell? Hadn't it been settled once for all that one subject was as good as another? Well, then; stick to harmonious equipotentiality, and go ahead!

Yes; but what sort of talk was that? There were reasons why perfect and democratic freedom of choice in the high schools and universities was impossible; it was precluded by the limited nature of courses in the case of both, and in the case of one it was further precluded by the fact that the higher institution presumed to specify the sort of training that best fitted those from the lower institution to participate in its advantages. All this was of course undemocratic—outrageously so. In the name of equality and inalienable right, let there be a further extension of the limits of freedom.

All well enough again; but in what should the extension consist? There was nothing to be added by way of ease and variety along the line of intellectual study, said old-fashioned folks; they were already ashamed of the pale, whitey-blue,

opalescent, hydrogalactic nature alike of subjects, methods, and results.

But democracy sniffed. Education these days was as far superior to the education of twenty years ago, it said, as everything else of today was superior to things of the old-fogey past. People had always idealized "the good old times," and they were still doing it; but it was all nonsense, this being enslaved to days gone by. The ignorance of an unpedagogically trained past might be excusable, but it was nevertheless pitiable. If there was no way to make intellectual subjects produce results, let the purely intellectual subjects give place to something that *would* produce results. Was there nothing that would educate but musty, dusty old books? Was the mind the only concern of education? No, indeed! Hands were in need of education as well as tongues and brains; and besides, the mental qualities cultivated by the skilful teaching of the handling of tools were not second to those acquired by the writing and analysis of sentences and the attempted absorption of the wisdom of the ages. It was rank undemocratic discrimination to exclude from participation in the benefits of the public educational system those who through mere accident of birth were not qualified to study books. Your future teacher, or lawyer, or preacher, or what not, could find in the high school something to help him on the road to his life-work; but how about your future mason, or carpenter, or housewife?

And after all, come to think of it, of what use were the ordinary intellectual studies to the great majority of those who engaged in them? Even between the so-called learned professions and the high-school course there was very doubtful connection, and when it came to the more usual vocations, there was simply *no* connection. Every year there were multitudes of graduates with a smattering of language, history, mathematics, and science, who surely were not fitted for the professions, and who would go to work at nothing else. High-school graduates were employed by grocers, and didn't know how to harness a horse or drive a bung into a vinegar barrel, and when they were reproached with their ignorance, came back

at you with something about Charlemagne at the battle of Magna Charta, or the influence of the Reformation on the romantic movement, or other such rot. Boys wanted to be carpenters, and couldn't saw a board straight, to say nothing of sharpening a tool. They wanted to enter mercantile houses, and didn't know bookkeeping and stenography. Girls wanted to teach, and they had had no actual practice with classes, and had never heard of Froebel and Pestalozzi, to say nothing of never having subscribed to a journal of education. They married and went into homes, and couldn't boil potatoes and turn pancakes, or broil a beefsteak, or fry an egg. A fine state of affairs! Here they were, spending years of valuable time, and at the end they were actually worse off than boys and girls who had gone to work after passing from the grades. Outrageous! And on money expended by the state, too, which had good right to demand a return.

Let there be an accommodation of courses to life, then. Let there be domestic science; let the girls of the land be made into marriageable women who should know how to keep their husbands healthy and happy by economy and good cooking. Let there be an end to full garbage pails and dyspepsia. Let there be typewriting, and bookkeeping, and stenography, and manual training, and the trades, and agriculture. Let science be brought into line with life. Away with useless old experiments that led to nowhere! A fireless cooker afforded just as much opportunity for experimental education as apparatus for the determination of specific gravity or heat expansion, and the pupil learned something that helped in life, and qualified her to repay the state. In the same way, let ancient history give way to modern; the past was entertaining enough, of course, but the great thing about America was its freedom from the trammels of tradition. The problems of the ages were being worked out on American soil just for that reason. In the same way, too, let English history give way to American; Europe had nothing to teach us; our concern was with *this* side of the water. And let ideas about language study be revised, too. Let students learn to use good English through *using* it, not

through studying Latin and German and geometry, and let them learn to think by *thinking*, not by playing with symbols and apparatus and reviewing the thoughts of men dead and gone; let them cease to go from Chicago to San Francisco by way of the Cape of Good Hope. And as for literature, the English language afforded easy access to all that was desirable for ordinary purposes, even if it could be proven desirable, which was after all a mere matter of opinion; literature was really more an ornament than anything else, and could be acquired in after life during noonings at the office, or on the way back and forth on the elevated; and besides, the magazines were full of literature, and you couldn't very well escape it if you tried.

As a matter of fact, when all was said and done, the thing called liberal education itself wasn't above criticism. Lots of people who possessed it were failures, and lots of people succeeded without it. If a man was going to be a lawyer, or a merchant, or a lecturer on education, why not go about it directly by going into law school and office, or into a store, or getting practical experience in some sensible way? Count up your successful professors. How many of them had a special knowledge of Greek and Latin, or history, or anything else except the literature of their own subjects? The way to succeed in your chosen line was to choose early and avoid the extraneous.

Again, look at your lawyers—there were almost as many without as with a college education. Look at your great railway officials—hardly one of them had been beyond the high school. Look at your millionaires—many of them were actually illiterate. Look at the superintendents of mills, and the highest-salaried engineers and mechanics—they didn't know a thing about the romantic movement or the precession of the equinoxes. Clearly enough, liberal culture was only a manner of speaking—an *ignis fatuus* that was quite as likely to lead away from as toward success in life. At any rate, it wasn't the only means to success, and it took a long time, and kept both individual and state from their right for the time it consumed. On the whole, it would contribute to democracy in

education and in general, and relieve the situation in a variety of ways, if liberal education were dropped. Even grant its desirability; after all, it was a luxury, and the state couldn't be expected to provide luxuries, under pressure as it was to set within reach of its citizens the plain necessities. Let liberal training—if there was any such thing—be classed with other luxuries, and let those acquire it who were willing to expend time and money for it; the money of the people was not to be spent without some prospect of a return. Let there be an end to this choosing of a life-occupation when life was already half spent; let the bent of youth be ascertained at the earliest possible moment, and let the public school begin then the training of students for life-work. Keep in mind that it was the amount of work that counted, not the character of the subject; the real truth was that four years of study was four years of study, and that was all there was to it. To exclude from graduation from the high school anyone with four years of work to his credit was a flagrant violation of inalienable right. To deny the privilege of entering the university to anyone with a high-school diploma was just as flagrant, and more so, because it savored of the presumption of aristocracy. Don't lose sight of the harmonious equipotentiality of subjects and courses and people.

III

Such the mingling of "Knowledge is Power" and "Knowledge is an Inalienable Right" in the American Idea, which we may now venture to define as "education for service, for all citizens, in all practical things, continuously through all grades of all institutions, without money and without price, and without distinction." Such the democratization—and demoralization—of American education.

Not that all this is yet accomplished. Far from it. It is perfectly clear, let us hope, that in our attempt to define the American idea we have not only followed the chronological stream down to the present, but have been carried pleasantly beyond to the ocean of the future. From analysis we have passed insensibly into the wild seraphic fire of prophecy.

And not that it is all going to be accomplished. It would be pessimism indeed that prompted such a belief. Prophecy has always been accompanied by a saving "if"; and when the prophet has been eloquent enough, and his people endowed with common-sense enough, his words have been prophylactic, not prophetic. All that the critics of the American idea mean to say is that if past and present tendencies are not checked the democratic movement in education seems likely to neutralize its successes by some such failures as are suggested by the above analysis. The stress laid upon universalization of the educational privilege and the "vitalization" of subjects of instruction will drive liberal training from the field, and transform the public-school system into the instrument of mere business. Democracy, in spite of the sincerity and benevolence of purpose which no one fails to recognize, and in spite of great substantial achievement in bringing education within the reach of the people, will have fallen short of the full glory craved for it by the more enlightened champions of popular government.

And this through fault of logic. The logic of democracy is showing itself to be in the matter of education the logic of the average; and the average do not always reason on a foundation of full and accurate knowledge. To be more exact, not through fault of logic—for, granted the premises, democracy is logical to a fault—so much as through the basing of logic on false premises.

What are these false premises? In the spirit of those who fondly do hope and fervently do pray for education of the people, by the people, and for the people as a means of keeping the nation from perishing from the earth, let us examine one or two of them.

Let us not dispute the premise that knowledge is power; whether by power is meant the spiritual capacity of rising superior to the environment of a hard world, or the less worthy capability of taking advantage of one's fellows, to most men knowledge is a desirable instrument in the craftsmanship of living.

The less invulnerable premise that power is happiness may

also be left unmolested—at least until someone tells us what happiness really is.

But let us not for a moment leave unquestioned the premise that knowledge is a universally possible and democratic thing. Some degree of it is of course universally attainable; but the degree of accomplishment necessary to intellectual distinction is incapable of anything approaching universal achievement, and democracy itself is beginning to have more than a suspicion of its own mistake. Men of wit have always been the noticeable exception, not the rule. Had it been otherwise, there would have been no stamping of common thought into the current coin of "Knowledge is Power." Intellectual ability is, and always has been, an aristocratic thing—not invidiously aristocratic, of course, but aristocratic in the sense of belonging to the few who have been possessed of really strong mentality, native and acquired.

The tacit and more or less popular assumption that the higher intellectual education is for all who possess the means to attend high school and university is one of the main factors in the present inefficiency of the American system. The democratization of that which is by nature aristocratic is impossible; the result is bound to be destruction. The height which only the strong-limbed and strong-lunged mountain-climber is able to reach may be made accessible to every weakling only by being leveled to the plain; and then it is no longer a height—and besides, the real climber's occupation is gone. What has been taking place has not been the raising of all citizens to the level of knowledge, which is by nature an impossibility, but the—attempted, at least—leveling of knowledge to the plane of the ordinary. Liberal training, once a distinction and an advantage, has been cheapened until it is held in contempt unless in some way combined with the immediately practical. As in Mark Twain's story there were no gentlemen because everyone was a gentleman—or claimed to be—so there is now no intellectual aristocracy because everyone is an intellectual aristocrat. True, he may not always be a willing party to the fraud; he sometimes has to submit to the A.B. whether he

wants it or not. Like the church, which was inundated by the spiritually unfit in the time of Constantine and lost its high quality, intellectual life under democracy has become debased through taking to itself the whole world of the intellectually unfit. There has been a wonderful gain in number, and those whose consciences allow them to make use of the particular form of lying known as statistics, or who are innocent victims to it, are of course in the throes of almost fatal delight; but there has been no corresponding gain in distinction. Length and breadth have increased, but altitude has diminished. Worse than that; unable to bring every mountain low, democracy sticks its head in the sand-flats of its own creation and refuses to concede the existence of high ground at all.

A curious reversal of situation is thus threatening to appear. The many were once without educational opportunity; now it is the fit and few who are menaced with deprivation. Once it was the ambitious son of the masses who had to burn the midnight candle to educate himself; now the ambitious son of the well to do, if he wants the kind of education that real intellectual aptitude calls for, is in danger of having to look for it at a sacrifice, outside of the public-school system. Once liberal training was accidental to the masses; now it bids fair to become accidental to the classes. Once the educational system was private and aristocratic, and intolerable to democracy; now it is public and democratic, and fast becoming intolerable to aristocracy. Once college and university lifted up an ideal before the people; now the people, having learned from by no means unintelligent observation of the department of pedagogy that there is no end of writing books and delivering opinions on education and getting them read and listened to, has grown wide-eyed with wisdom of its own, and is forcing an ideal upon college and university. Once aristocracy cherished the best, and assumed that the fairly good would take care of itself; now democracy devotes itself to the fairly good, and assumes that the best will take care of itself. Once aristocracy unjustly identified social rank and educational privilege; today democracy will recognize neither the rank nor the privilege. Once subjects

not clearly intellectual existed in the high school and college only on sufferance; now only the demonstrably practical passes unchallenged. It was once assumed that business would take care of itself; now the assumption is that culture will take care of itself. Aristocracy lost sight of the common people; democracy, with as great injustice and shortsightedness, is losing sight of the uncommon people.

Let us attack, too, putting on the whole armor, the premise that all subjects and all courses are equivalent factors in the product of liberal education. The hand and the material things it manipulates are after all only servants of the mind. Civilization is founded on the distinctive possession of wit by men, and wit has always been inseparably associated with record of some sort; and the interpretation of this record—in literature and the other arts—must always stand in the front rank of subjects necessary to any intellectual education worthy of the name; to slight it is to take the ground that the past experience of mankind is of no concern to the present. The study of letters and the arts is of course not the only thing necessary to liberal culture, but it is not far from being the only indispensable thing. It may not be indispensable to the ordinary professional education, but it is indispensable to the *best*. Even the industrial education that does not build upon its foundation fails to do so at the cost of enlightened citizenship and workmanship.

Again, the premise is false that all preparation for life—whether cultural or vocational—may be profitably demanded of one institution. A university, by its name, is an institution that may undertake all training as its province; but to thrust into the college of liberal arts, or into the “people’s college,” courses which profess to equip for the non-intellectual careers is prostitution and waste, from whichever side it is viewed. The assumption that industry and liberal culture—“the anvil and the arts”—will react on each other to mutual advantage is as pernicious as it is attractive; which is saying a great deal, for we are still blinded by the glamor of the idea. They do react; nothing is more certain; but not to mutual advantage. The much-looked-for benefits of the alliance have accrued neither

to anvil nor to arts. If indeed the anvil ever progresses far enough in its acquaintance with the arts to conceive anything but contempt for them, the common run of successful, self-made, practical anvils at once charge it with not ringing true. And as for the arts, there are few of them that do not run the risk of breakage in too close proximity to hammer and tongs—especially if the blacksmith is not wholly free from disingenuousness. The sooner we set apart by themselves our vocational courses, as other countries do, the sooner we shall have *real* vocational training, and cease to be a laughing-stock for our neighbors. If the high school and the college of liberal arts are to be given over to the training of carpenters and cooks and office men, very well; then let them produce real carpenters and cooks and office men, not nondescripts. On the other hand, let there be some place for liberal education to proceed undisturbed toward the accomplishment of *its* purpose.

For liberal training has an end of its own, and that end is prejudiced if it must be pursued in the atmosphere of hurry and worry that envelops vocational training. The purpose of liberal education is not culture for culture's sake, as many ignorantly suppose; nor is its purpose, on the other hand, the immediate production of professional men and women. Its purpose is to *make possible the best*—the broadest professional men, the most far-seeing engineers and architects and mechanics, the most cultivated literary men and artists, the most intelligent statesmen and citizens, the most sane and enlightened liver of life. It looks forward to the citizen equipped "to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously all the affairs of peace and war," and concerns itself especially with "justly" and "magnanimously," leaving "skilfully" for the most part to the vocational school. It is a corrective to the shortsightedness of the vocational scramble; it is a conservative influence which serves to defer choice of a life-career until the student has been helped to discover the strongest quality in his make-up—which is the one he must build on if he is to play the game of life by giving his personality opportunity to expand to its utmost capacity. It is not in a hurry, and it formulates broad definitions of the

practical and the useful. Its motto resembles that of the conservationist as expressed by President Van Hise: Education is for "the greatest service to the greatest number *for the longest time.*" In its higher phases, it is not for everyone who can afford residence in a college town, but for those only who can be wrought into a distinctive product. It is as necessary to the state as any technical or professional school—and more so, because the best is more necessary than the good, and it makes possible the best in those schools. It should not be pursued to the exclusion or neglect of vocational training, but it should not itself be neglected. It is time the idea that genius will take care of itself were exploded—or mere ordinary culture. Genius may in some cases have risen superior to the neglect, or even opposition, of a school board, but it is nevertheless not independent of encouragement.

And it is time also to drop the idea that an abundance of the fairly good either takes the place or excuses the absence of the best. The progress of the world is measured by its best nations, and that of nations by their best men. The critics of democracy are already saying that it does not foster the best as distinguished from the good. If it fails to provide for the best in education, as well as for the good, it will have slighted its great opportunity. There is bound to be liberal education somewhere, and there is no valid reason why the state should not be its agent; if all citizens who believed in it were to speak their minds, it would be a surprise to the educational world. The liberal arts, once sitting serene in the high citadels of aristocratic privilege, have descended and offered themselves to the common dwellers in the plain; if they are flouted, we may look to see them return to their blessed heights, and adopt their old-time attitude of reserve. Liberal culture will again be aristocratized; the knowledge that is distinction that is power that is happiness will once more hang beyond the reach of the intellectual common man—and there we shall be again, with the same old problem of inalienable right on our hands.